

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
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AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJ: MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR THE FREE DEMOCRATS IN HESSE

REF: (A) BONN 10672; (B) FRANKFURT 3529 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE HESSIAN FDP FACING A DECISION WHETHER TO COMMIT ITSELF
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FOR CONTINUING COALITION WITH THE SDP IS SPLIT ON THE ISSUE.
GENSCHER AND THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP ARE ATTEMPTING TO
RALLY THE PARTY IN FAVOR OF DOING SO BUT MAY NOT BE
ABLE TO AVOID A PUBLIC FIGHT AT THE HESSIAN
FDP CONVENTION ON JUNE 17. FORMATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL
INDEPENDENT SLATE FURTHER COMPLICATES THE ISSUE FOR THE
FDP WHILE THE CDU QUITE NATURALLY IS TAKING MAXIMUM

ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WAKE OF THE FDPS ELECTION DISASTERS IN LOWER SAXONY AND HAMBURG ON JUNE 4 THE HESSIAN FREE DEMOCRATS ARE ENGAGED IN DESPERATE SOUL-SEARCHING AS THEY APPROACH THE EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONVENTION TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JUNE 17. THE ISSUE BEFORE THAT CONVENTION IS WHETHER THE PARTY SHOULD DECLARE ITSELF IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING THE COALITION WITH THE SPD IN LAND HESSE OR WHETHER IT SHOULD HOLD THE COALITION QUESTION OPEN UNTIL AFTER THE OCTOBER 8 ELECTIONS.

2. EVEN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS IN LOWER SAXONY AND HAMBURG THE STATES FDP CHAIRMAN EKKEHARD GRIES HAD--CONTRARY TO INDICATIONS HE HAD GIVEN EARLIER--ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE THE COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ALBEIT WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE FDP WOULD NOT BE BOUND INDEFINITELY TO ONLY ONE COALITION PARTNER.

3. THE FIRST ALMOST PANICKY REACTION TO THE SETBACKS OF JUNE 4 APPEARED TO BE A REVOLT OF A MAJOR PORTION OF THE FDP DELEGATES. SEVERAL GROUPS OF DELEGATES TO THE JUNE 17 CONVENTION ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WOULD INTRODUCE RESOLUTIONS WHICH, IN VARIOUS FORMS, WOULD PROPOSE A CONVENTION DECISION IN FAVOR OF HOLDING THE COALITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTION OPEN AND ONE WENT SO FAR AS TO CALL FOR GRIES' RESIGNATION. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS AS MANY AS 115 OF THE TOTAL 300 DELEGATES WHO WILL ATTEND THE CONVENTION FAVOR HOLDING THE COALITION QUESTION OPEN AND SOME BELIEVE THEY CAN GET THE ADDITIONAL VOTES TO CARRY THE DAY. IN ANY EVENT THE PARTY IS FAIRLY WELL SPLIT ON THE ISSUE. IN AN EFFORT TO REPAIR THIS SPLIT GENSCHER CAME OUT CLEARLY OVER THIS PAST WEEKEND IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING THE HESSIAN COALITION WITH THE SPD URGING THE FDP LEADERSHIP IN HESSE TO DO ITS UTMOST IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO AVOID A CONTENTIOUS PUBLIC ROW ON JUNE 17 AND ESTABLISH THE BROADEST POSSIBLE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THIS DECISION.

4. THE CDU FOR ITS PART IS USING EVERY POSSIBLE OCCASTION TO MAKE LIFE AS DIFFICULT AS POSSIBLE FOR THE FDP. CDU STATE CHAIRMAN ALFRED DREGGER HAS REPEATED HIS COALITION OFFER TO THE FDP SEVERAL TIMES SINCE THE LOWER SAXONY/HAMBURG ELECTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME DREGGER HAS SAID THAT IF THE HESSIAN FDP OPTS FOR THE SPD ON JUNE 17, HE WILL NOT CONDUCT A CAMPAIGN OF "CONFRONTATION" WITH THE FDP BUT RATHER WILL ARGUE

THAT THE PROPER HOME FOR THE TRUE LIBERAL IS THE CDU.

5. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE THREE ENVIRONMENTAL AND INDEPENDENT GROUPS ANNOUNCED OVER THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 10/11 THE FORMATION OF THEIR OWN COALITION. NAMED THE GLW OR GREEN LIST-VOTERS INITIATIVE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND DEMOCRACY, IT ANNOUNCED IT WOULD ENTER THE OCTOBER 8 ELECTIONS WITH ITS OWN LIST OF CANDIDATES.

6. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN HESSE ALSO CAST ITS SHADOW ON THE SPD COMMEMORATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BISMARCK'S 1878 LEGISLATION AGAINST THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THE EVENT HELD IN FRANKFURTS PAULSKIRCHE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SPD HESSIAN CHAIRMAN, MINISTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESIDENT BORNER, TO WARN THE FDP AGAINST "CASUALLY" RISKING THE PROVEN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SPD. WILLY BRANDT, REALIZING WELL THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FDPS POSSIBLE DEMISE IN HESSE FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS NATIONAL POSITION, STRESSED THAT GERMANY NEEDS A STRONG AND HEALTHY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AND WARNED DARKLY AGAINST THE "LATENT DANGER" THAT THE POLITICAL PENDULUM IN THE FRG MIGHT SWING TOO FAR BACKWARDS. LEHMANN

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